

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1947.

ALL ITEMS - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers for retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for June quarter, 1947, showed a very small increase over the March quarter in all of the Queensland towns for which prices are collected, except Townsville where there was a slight decrease. The index number for Townsville is substantially the highest of those for the six towns, but its relative increase compared with the year 1938-39 is less than in any other of the towns. Index numbers for the June quarter (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 in the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane 1125, Toowoomba 1141, Rockhampton 1129, Townsville 1169, Bundaberg 1108, and Warwick 1125.

The figures show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increase in June Quarter, 1947.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.		From June Quarter, 1946.		From March Quarter, 1947.	
		%		%		%
Brisbane	30.4		3.2		0.2
Toowoomba	34.1		3.6		0.2
Rockhampton	31.1		3.4		0.3
Townsville	28.2		3.5		-0.3
Bundaberg	31.7		3.6		0.1
Warwick	36.9		4.2		0.2

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increase in June Quarter, 1947.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1947.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1947.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1947.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	21.0	-0.2	86.0	0.9	21.2	0.1
Toowoomba	32.7	0.1	82.4	0.2	20.9	0.2
Rockhampton	21.3	0.7	81.7	-0.2	23.2	0.3
Townsville	19.0	-0.1	83.7	-0.1	19.8	-0.7
Bundaberg	22.3	-0.1	81.6	0.3	18.8	0.3
Warwick ..	27.3	-0.3	84.7	0.7	23.3	0.1

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for June quarter, 1947 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane 966, Toowoomba 994, Rockhampton 964, Townsville 1028, Bundaberg 937, and Warwick 947.

From March quarter, 1947, to June quarter, 1947, the "B" Series index showed increases in Toowoomba 0.2%, and Rockhampton 0.5%, decreases in Brisbane 0.2%, Townsville 0.1%, and Warwick 0.1%, and remained stationary in Bundaberg.

A drop in the price of meat in all towns was counteracted by increases in the prices of such grocery lines as jam, flour, soap and condensed milk.

The rent index increased 0.3% in Toowoomba and 0.1% in Rockhampton, but remained stationary in all other towns.

Compared with June quarter, 1946, the "B" Series index increased in Brisbane, 3.5%, Toowoomba, 4.4%, Rockhampton, 5.2%, Townsville, 4.6%, Bundaberg, 4.6%, and Warwick, 5.2%.

The rent index showed no movement in Bundaberg, but increases were recorded in Brisbane, 0.1%, Toowoomba, 0.3%, Rockhampton, 1.0%, Townsville, 0.1%, and Warwick, 0.7%.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Clothing and Footwear prices rose steadily during the early years of the recent war, until they were about 75 per cent. above their pre-war level by June, 1943. The "Price Ceiling" policy was introduced early in 1943, and the clothing and footwear index declined slightly from June quarter 1943 to September quarter 1945, when it again commenced to rise. In the fifteen months to December 1946, clothing and footwear prices rose above the September 1945 level by 9.2 per cent. in Brisbane, and by similar amounts in the other cities. A decline in the March quarter 1947 was due to a reduction of Sales Tax on most clothing items. In June quarter 1947 clothing and footwear prices increased slightly in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, and Warwick, and decreased slightly in Rockhampton and Townsville.

Miscellaneous items were nearly 20 per cent. above their pre-war price level by June, 1943, and have remained fairly steady since that date, with the exception of an increase of about 1 per cent. in the March quarter 1947, due to an increase in the price of tobacco and cigarettes.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1947, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba ..	1.	0.	3.	1.	0.	10.	1.	0.	0.		19.	7.
Rockhampton ..	1.	0.	1.	1.	1.	0.		18.	1.		19.	11.
Townsville ..	1.	0.	9.	1.	1.	11.	1.	0.	1.	1.	0.	0.
Bundaberg ..		19.	8.	1.	1.	4.		15.	9.		19.	9.
Warwick ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	9.	17.	4.			19.	9.

BASIC WAGE RATES IN STATE CAPITAL CITIES.

The table on page 3 shows the Retail Price Index Number ("C" Series) for each of the six Capital Cities for the June quarter of 1947 and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would be required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State Basic Wage in its own Capital City. The differences between these amounts and the State Basic Wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland Basic Wage over each of the other State Basic Wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates - June Quarter, 1947.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) June, 1947.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males.	State Court Basic Wage for Males.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
	Index.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane	1125	5. 4. 0.	5. 8. 0.	5. 8. 0.	- -
Sydney	1194	5. 10. 0.	5. 10. 0.	5. 3. 8.	4. 4.
Melbourne	1175	5. 8. 0.	5. 8. 0.	5. 3. 5.	4. 7.
Adelaide	1154	5. 4. 0.	5. 2. 0. (a)	4. 19. 5.	8. 7.
Perth	1151	5. 4. 0.	5. 7. 1.	5. 4. 8.	3. 4.
Hobart	1158	5. 5. 0.	5. 5. 0.	5. 2. 0.	6. 0.

(a) The State basic wage for Adelaide was wrongly shown at £5.3.0. in the bulletin for March quarter, 1947.

In December, 1946, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court awarded an interim basic wage increase. The new interim basic wage was determined on the same principles as had been used for the existing basic wage, except that, in determining the "needs" portion of the wage, a new "Court" Index Number (Court Index-Second Series) was to be used. This index number was derived by multiplying the "C" Series Index Number by .087, instead of .081, as heretofore. The effect is to equate the "needs" wage to the equivalent of 87s.0d., instead of 81s.0d., in the Six Capital Cities during the period 1923 to 1927. To the "needs" wage was still to be added the existing "prosperity" loading, 6s.0d. in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, and 4s.0d. in the other States. The application of these principles gave an increase in the Commonwealth Basic Wage of 7s.0d. in all Capital Cities, except Hobart, where it was 6s.0d. These increases operated from 1st December, 1946.

Following the Commonwealth Basic Wage rise, State Basic Wages were increased as follows:- Brisbane, 7s.0d. (from 23rd December, 1946); Sydney and Melbourne, 7s.0d. (from 1st December, 1946); Hobart, 6s.0d. (from 1st December, 1946); and Adelaide, 3s.6d. (from 7th January, 1947). The Western Australian State Court followed with an increase of 5s.0d., payable from the beginning of March, 1947.

The rise in the "C" Series Index Number during the quarter ended June, 1947, caused a "cost of living" addition of 1s.0d. to the Commonwealth Basic Wage in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart. The State Basic Wages in Melbourne and Hobart (which adopt Commonwealth rates) received increases of 1s.0d., while the Adelaide State Basic Wage remained at £5.2s.0d.

S. E. SOLOMON.

ACTING GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

RETAIL PRICES INDEX.

Table No. 1.

THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year Ended Decr., 1928	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1947.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				June, 1946.	September, 1946.	December, 1946.	March, 1947.	June, 1947.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1113	1090	1092	1110	1123	1125
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1128	1101	1106	1125	1139	1141
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1115	1092	1093	1111	1126	1129
Townsville ..	1023	912	1158	1129	1135	1156	1172	1169
Bundaberg ..	(b)	841	1095	1070	1073	1090	1107	1108
Weighted Average								
Five Cities (a)	915	864	1116	1093	1095	1114	1127	1129
Warwick ..	914	822	1110	1080	1085	1108	1123	1125

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2. FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) INDEX - "B" SERIES.
(Base = 1000 in 1925-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year	Year	Year	QUARTERS ENDED -				
	Ended Decr., 1928.	Ended June, 1939.	Ended June, 1947.	June, 1946.	September, 1946.	December, 1946.	March, 1947.	June, 1947.
Brisbane ..	901	852	950	933	925	942	968	966
Toowoomba ..	833	821	975	952	950	965	992	994
Rockhampton ..	858	837	942	916	913	930	959	964
Townsville ..	1047	916	1011	983	984	1001	1029	1028
Bundaberg ..	(b)	799	918	896	892	907	937	937
Weighted Average								
Five Cities (a)	892	851	954	935	929	945	972	971
Warwick ..	841	768	928	900	899	917	948	947

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3. AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES, BRISBANE.